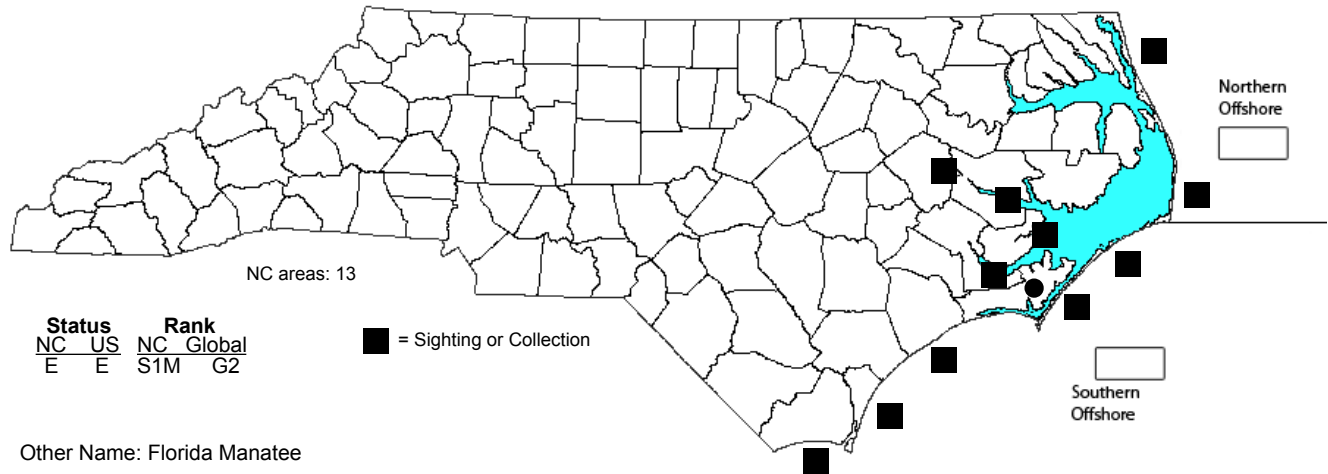


Trichechus manatus West Indian Manatee



DISTRIBUTION: Occurs essentially annually along the coast of NC, mainly along the southern third of the coast (Carteret County southward). Manatees tend to be seen inshore of the ocean, such as along the Intracoastal Waterway or other bays, estuaries, and lower portions of large rivers (at bay mouths), sparingly as far as New Bern. It has occurred also along the entire NC coast.

Occurs in warm waters along the Atlantic coast, sparingly as far north as the Chesapeake Bay area, but mainly from FL southward.

ABUNDANCE: Rare but essentially annual along the southern coast, with a few sightings in a given year. More frequent the farther south along the coast; not seen annually north of Cape Hatteras (where best considered very rare).

SEASONAL OCCURRENCE: Almost always in the warmer months of the year, as a visitor/stray northward from FL and other tropical waters.

HABITAT: In NC, favors brackish waters of estuaries, bays, and large river mouths; probably does much migration up and down the Intracoastal Waterway. Less frequently seen in the inshore ocean. Seldom or never seen up-river farther than the embayed portions, such as New Bern.

BEHAVIOR: This is a very tame and sluggish mammal, not afraid of swimmers or scuba divers. A moderate number are killed by speeding boats, farther southward.

COMMENTS: The species is also called the Florida Manatee. It is listed as Endangered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

STATUS: Native

LIST TYPE: Official